



February 4, 2002

The Honorable John Ashcroft
Attorney General of the United States
Attorney General Ashcroft
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20530-001

Dear Attorney General Ashcroft:

The Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) believes that a pending merger of EchoStar and Hughes, will provide significant, tangible benefits to Ohio consumers and most importantly to Ohio's rural areas. The merger will allow EchoStar to provide meaningful competition with cable and telephone companies as a virtual third line into the home for a bundle of video, data and internet services.

BASA is a statewide nonprofit professional organization whose membership includes school system leaders comprised of superintendents, central office administrators, building level administrators, higher education administrators and faculty, graduate students, and other educational personnel.

Competitively priced, high-speed Internet access via satellite will particularly benefit our members in rural areas, especially schools that do not have access to cable modem service or DSL. The merger will also help bridge the digital divide without the need for government loans that are currently being requested by various cable and telephone providers.

Ensuring equal opportunity for all of our students must remain our State's top priority in today's changing economic world. Students need to have skills that will make them marketable and successful. A key component for quality 21st century education will be having access to and taking advantage of opportunities that the Internet provides.

Thank you for assistance in support of this merger.

Respectfully,

Dick Maxwell
Executive Director